

B. Ch. h. d.



*The returning our SPIRITS to him that
gave them ; considered,*

IN a FUNERAL
SERMON

Occasioned by the
DEATH

Of the late REVEREND
Mr. *Daniel Wilcox ;*

Who departed this Life *April 11. 1733.*

Preached at
Monkwell Street, April 22.

By *JAMES WOOD.*

Published at the Church's Desire.

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W. Musgrave!



TO THE
CONGREGATION

Lately under the
PASTORAL CARE
OF THE
Rev^d. Mr. DANIEL WILCOX.

Christian Friends,

 *I was among the Complaints
of the Evangelical Prophet
that the Righteous perished
no Man laying it to heart,
and merciful Men were taken away
none considering that they were re-
moved from the Evil to come; they en-
ter into Peace, and do rest in their
Beds, all who have walked in their
Uprightness; are often housed when*

A 2Storms

Storms are gathering : for what is the Chaff to the Wheat ? When God smites such Shepherds as were skilful, and faithful to feed the Flock, takes off by sudden Strokes, Men apt to Teach, approved and successful Ministers of the New Testament, as these are Servants of distinguished Figure in his Family, and in a more exalted extensive Trust, the Call is louder to serious Thoughtfulness ; and it's criminal, exceedingly so, to refuse our Attention when these Calls are multiplied. I have Reason to believe that you whom I now address, are not without deep Thoughts of Heart upon the Breach which God has made upon you ; the Death of your Minister is a publick Loss, and many share in your present Grief. It will be well if our Reflections are judiciously conducted, and our Sorrows flow in their proper Channel. May it not be fit to enquire concerning our Improvement under the Labours of well qualify'd Ministers ? Whether when
thus

The Dedication.

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thus hurried from our World, it is not in Wrath to us, tho in Mercy to themselves?

YOUR Settlement, if comfortable, may not be any easy Thing. God make you Prayerful, keep you United, prevent Rashness in an Affair so nearly affecting his own Glory, your Souls Welfare, and that of surviving Posterity. Let your Eyes be to a Man who shall preach the Gospel in its primitive Purity, and Simplicity, one whose Doctrines have a Witness within you, as to their being the Truths of God; that instead of losing what has been already wrought, you may be further builded up in your most Holy Faith. Tho you miss of a Man of the same Gifts with your worthy deceased Pastor (he was almost peculiar in many) endeavour to get one of the same Spirit, one of Christ's furnishing, the glorious Head of the Church; and whom he will delight to Honour.

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THE Choice which you made of me, to perform this last Office of Respect to the deceased, encourages me to hope that this honest Freedom I use, will not be unacceptable. My Prayers shall ascend with yours, for another Pastor after God's Heart, who shall come to you in the Fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel of Christ: better I cannot wish you, and this is the unfeigned Resolution, as it has already been the Practice,

Of, Christians,

Your faithful Friend,

and Servant,

*Mansel's Street,
Apr. 23. 1733.*



J. WOOD.

PSALM

P S A L M XXXI V.

*Into thine hand I commit my Spirit :
thou hast redeemed me, O Lord
God of truth.*



HIS Portion of Scripture, upon which, at your request, I am now to discourse, was the last Subject open'd to you by your late very worthy Pastor. One more fit he could not have chosen, had he seen that his Departure was at Hand. A man of his Piety, must *himself* have done with freedom of Mind, what he then recommended to *you*; committed his Spirit, all that concerned him for both Worlds, into a Redeemer's Hands: Thus, it was like his being anointed for his Burial. God took him at his Word, his Labours and Sufferings being deemed sufficient; a Reflection which wisely improv'd should moderate the *common* Grief: for who doubts, that although no more with us, he is with Christ, which is far better? Methinks I hear the soft flowing Eloquence, with which he did expatiate on this Pas-

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page;

sage ; the moving, affecting Turns, almost peculiar to this Preacher of Righteousness, by which he strove to impress your Minds, and spirit you to the Duty in the Text. So essential a part of Religion this is, that Strangers to it, however specious their Profession, must be miserable while they live, and everlastingly undone, without a thorough Change. Here is another dying *Preacher*, (for the Treasure is in earthen Vessels) called by this awful Providence to speak to a Multitude of dying *Hearers* ; God grant us both to *do* from our Hearts what we shall *say*, and *hear*, that we may be found ready, however seemingly hasty the Call, and even sudden Death prove sudden Glory. May this be the Day of Power, in which Sinners are made willing ; and every Branch of our Father's Family here before God, be so helped to recognize his Authority, and refer their All to his Son's Care, as may turn to the best Account, Living, Dying, and after Death.

The Words I have read, were uttered by *David* ; a very great, yet a very good Man. He had acquainted himself with God ; neither the Heights of Prosperity, broke off the Correspondence, or the opposite Extreme : tho' few met with greater Variety ; were more exalted, and depressed, tossed, distressed, and comforted, than he. The Scriptures he had to converse with, compared with ours, were an incompleat Revelation ; it is plain however, that he gathered from them the Doctrine
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of *Redemption* by Jesus Christ (the Glory of the Gospel under both Testaments) that of the supreme *Godhead* of his Saviour, and so his being equal to whatever he might want, or expect from him. The committing his Soul into these hands, would have been a rash, and obviously dangerous Act, but upon these Principles: and his Example, deserv'd Abhorrence, rather than Imitation, Yes, he was no mean Proficient in divine things, who could in the appropriating Language of Faith, say, Thou hast redeemed *me*; O Lord God of Truth. That *David* being in great Distress, so as that *Life* was in Danger, he here address'd himself to God, and meant no more in these Words, than Lord I put my *Life* in thine Hand, who hast often in critical times *delivered me*, and so kept thy Covenant-Promise sacred, and inviolate, is a poor, and wretchedly imperfect Interpretation. I am greatly mistaken, if much more be not included in this Passage. His *Spirit* signifies his *Soul*, and the *Redemption* which he attributes to the Lord God of Truth, the Spiritual, and Eternal *Redemption* of which Christ is the Author to all who believe, and obey. Nor was there any thing proper, or peculiar to this Man of God, either in Sentiment, or Practice: All God's People are taught of him, who makes wise to Salvation; they know in whom they believe, and do deliberately intrust their Redeemer with the keeping of

their Souls ; fully persuaded that he is able to keep them from falling, and preserve them blameless to his heavenly Kingdom.

The two following Heads comprise in them what is needful to be said under the *Doctrinal* Part : we shall then proceed, having dispatched them, to the *Practical Application*, and Improvement of this Subject.

- I. Here is a very instructive and explicit Profession of *David's Faith* : he fears not to call Christ, *the Lord God of Truth, who had redeemed him.*
- II. We have an Account of what he *did*, as well as of what he *said*.

A more important and absolutely necessary instance of Obedience could not be couched under fewer Words : I commit my *Spirit* (says he) into my Saviour's Hand, nor can I do him more Honour who has *redeemed it*.

We shall distinctly explain the *Faith*, and *Practice*, of the Royal Psalmist, and shew their beautiful Consistence : that all of us may walk according to this Rule, and mind these things.

- I. We shall take Notice of *David's Faith*. He was a Scribe well instructed to the Kingdom of Heaven. He believed in God, and believed also in Christ ; this is Life Eternal : and he shall another Day appear at the Head
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of those Witnesses, who rise up to condemn such as deny the Lord that bought them. Under his fainter Light, he kept clear of their Absurdity, that rob him of *proper*, by which I mean Divinity *Absolute* and *Supreme*, yet compliment him with the Title of their Saviour; nor would he own any for his *Redeemer*, of whom he could not predicate infinite Perfections. Say that Christ is called *God* with respect to the Authority, or Dominion delegated to him by the Father, how are we to understand the double Stile *Lord God*? If we do not acknowledge that it implies necessary Existence, as well as a Right to govern, the Godhead of the Father can no more be concluded from the Ascription of these Characters to him, than that of the Son: Yet in the first Case we do, and warrantably, admit the consequence. Besides, he throws an *Epithet* peculiarly strong and significant into his Description, to render it yet more discriminating, and intelligible: *Lord God of Truth*, was the well known Name of the God of the *Jews*¹.

This expresses his absolute, eternal, immutable Excellency and Glory; that his *Word* can no more change than his *Nature*; that he is most safely trusted as to whatever he has promised to give, be, or do. Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but his Word

¹ 1 Kings viii. 23. Micah vii. 17, 18, 19, 20. Psal. lxxi. 22, 23, 24, &c.

shall

shall not pass away. His Mind can never alter ; because, all things in their successive order of appearing present to him ; and what is there that can controul Omnipotence ?

But it may be said, that I beg the question ; that here is no mention made of *Christ* ; that *David* was a Stranger to our pretended Orthodoxy ; and matters of such moment should not be roundly asserted, but upon *rational* Evidence.

To which I reply, *thus*,

That *Christ* is not syllabically mentioned in the Text, is allowed ; but it does not follow that he is not the principal Party referred to in it. There is no better Comment upon Scripture than Scripture ; we must compare spiritual things with spiritual ; admit *natural* Deductions from the Whole as Parts of the Revelation, or we shall inevitably curtail and maim it. If *Christ* be elsewhere spoken of in the same Phrase, or with the greatest Resemblance of Diction, if nothing forbids our applying the *Matter* of what is here affirmed, to him, why should we be shy of it ? Why not agree about the Person to whom the Description answers ?

Now, does not our Redeemer mention *David's* calling him *Lord*, in the Spirit ? or under his special Impulse and Influence ? Recollect *Thomas's* noble confession when he was delivered from the Hurries of an unbeliev-

² Mat. xxii. 43, 44, 45.

ing Heart, *my Lord, and my God* ¹. Is he not the *Truth*, as well as the *Way*, and the *Life* ²? God's *righteous* Servant ³? The *faithful and true* Witness ⁴? Are not these Christ's New Testament Names, and what he was known by under the Old? Has he not been actually to you Christians the Lord God of Truth? Say so then, and the less Weight his Name has with others, be doubly zealous to exalt it, and make it honourable. Remember that the Word which was made Flesh, was with God, *and was God*; that *δέσποτης* ⁵, and *παντοκράτωρ* ⁶, which signify absolute Lordship, and boundless Power, are among the Saviour's recorded Glories. I think they must strain hard, who apply them to any other, and that there is no Difficulty in either Context to prove them to be attributed to Christ.

Well then, the Way thus far prepared, we will suppose holy *David* in the Language he used, thinking as he spoke, did publicly avow the unpopular Doctrine of his Saviour's *Divine Personality*: that he was God Almighty, All-sufficient, without Robbery equal with him whose Godhead is uncontested. That he was instructed in his *mediatory* Relation, and fully assured from the absolute Perfection of his Nature, that he was furnished for his Work, and did save to the ut-

¹ John xx. 28.

² John xiv. 6.

³ Isa. liii. 11.

⁴ Rev. i. 5.

⁵ Jude iv.

⁶ Rev. i. 8.

most all that came to God by him ; that his Redeemer was Lord of all, and over all God blessed for ever. God by *Nature* : Lord of the dead and living Seed he undertook for, as *God-man* ; his Authority in this complex Character sufficiently established: therefore Wisdom, Goodness, Power, Fidelity, and whatever else can be taken into the Notion of a Redeemer, into whose Hands a thoughtful Man would commit his Spirit, fully found in this Lord God of Truth. He saw him capable of suffering, and of satisfying ; removing every Obstruction in the way of his Happiness, and procuring whatever might perfect his Felicity ; both, as stipulated Articles, between the Father and Son, which forbid all Vergings towards Dubiousness of Mind, in reference to the Event. He knew that his Redeemer liv'd; was the living one who had Life in himself, and gave it to all that were given him: that God had laid our Help upon one that was mighty, and that in him whosoever believed he shou'd not be brought to Confusion. If any judge it strange, that Knowledge thus comprehensive and clear, shou'd reach even the best of Men at such a distance from the Incarnation of Christ, it is enough to say, we are assured by an unexceptionable hand that the *Gospel* was preached to them (the *Israelites*) as well as unto us : if it was, that part of God's Counsel

¹ Heb. iv. 2.

which I have mentioned, could not have been withheld from them: for the Doctrine of Christ's Mediation is the very Substratum of the whole Gospel Scheme; and that of his Godhead (not figurative but proper) the very formal Reason of Faith and Obedience.

A wise Man thinks before he acts; does not dispose of *less* matters without answerable Satisfaction; of his *Soul* he will not, till every Scruple removed, and he has some degree of Confidence that no hazard is run in the making that part of his last Will and Testament, which he purposes never to revoke; and compared with which thousands of Gold and Silver, are but Show, Trifle, altogether Vanity, scarce *worth* the mention. I therefore add,

II. As the Text is an Abridgment of *David's* Faith, in Points fitly accounted *the first Principles* of a Saint; or the capital Articles of a good Man's Creed; so it gives us a Sketch of his *Practice*, at least of one important branch of the Duty and Obedience which is never neglected but at the visible hazard of the Soul. He deliberately, and with the full Consent of his Mind, committed his *Spirit* into his hand who redeemed *him*; *i. e.* his *Person*, his Body and Soul, and would, in consequence, take care of both: *q. d.* tho the outer Man perish, it matters but little so that my Soul be safe. If the Redeemer admit of the Dedication I now

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make,

make, of this solemn Bequest, in my returning this Spirit to him who twice gave it, created it when it was not, and recovered it by Price and Power when forfeited into the hands of Justice; all shall be well. This very Body shall sleep in him, my Grave prove a Bed in which I enter into Rest; it shall at his second Coming be brought with him, changed, glorified; in my Flesh shall I see God, and be my whole self for ever with the Lord. To whom else should I go, since he has the Words of eternal Life? Or why doubt I of his readiness to receive me, who will come from Heaven to prepare a place for me?

Upon a like melancholy Occasion with this', I was call'd to treat upon this Subject, from another Text²; this does a little cramp my Thoughts: however if you do attend to the following Particulars, you may find an useful Variety.

David does here consider himself as a dying Man. Remembered that there was a Part of him that would survive. That if this were not now secured of happy Being after Death, he must be wretched for ever. That his Redeemer's were the only hands, where he could lodge this Trust, and whence he might expect the wished for Happiness. Hence, coolly and as I shall shew you, most rationally

¹ *The Reverend Mr. Hill's Funeral Sermon.*

² 2 Tim. i. 12.

does he form, and execute the Design of thus laying up a good Foundation against the time to come, that he might not miss, when every Creature fail'd him, of eternal Life.

These things were not slightly examined, seen indistinctly, and at a distance, but realized, pondered in his heart, till the Fire burned, then spake he with his Tongue. Believing with the heart, as well as confessing with his Mouth the Lord Jesus; honouring the Son, even as he honoured the Father, with Worship for kind and degree peculiar to God, as most reasonable Service.

1st. David does here look upon himself as a *dying* Man, a Sojourner on Earth as all his Fathers were, one who in the midst of Life was in Death; his Life a Vapour, and he at his best State altogether Vanity. He knew that he had here no continuing, or abiding City; that he was a Tenant at Will, that might be instantly removed without formal Warning, by the great Lord of Life.

Just way of Thinking, desirable Cast of Mind! the living have Hints innumerable, both in God's Word, and his World, by what they see, hear, feel, whence to know that they must die; but how few comparatively lay this to Heart? Death is a less grateful Subject of Contemplation; and the Grave springs up such Gloom and Melancholy, so shades this World's Beauties, and enervates what we too fondly incline to, that we avoid as much as may be, the discomfoting

Theme. Death surprises Thousands, while they are but beginning to live ; and too many who in the Vanity of their Hearts talked of living always, and never seeing Death. Tho never so many Years have passed over their Heads, *they* die immaturally, out of time ; for a Sinner an hundred years old, is accursed. These earthly Houses of our Tabernacles are Buildings of God ; the Structure elegant and commodious ; but Sin has so shatter'd it, as that its Dissolution is unavoidable. By one Man Sin enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin ; so Death passeth upon all Men, because all Men have sinned. 'Tis now appointed to all Men once to die ; the Dust must return to its Dust as it was : and these Bodies be new made. The difference between what they now are, and what they shall be, so remarkable, as without abuse of Language to be spiritual Bodies, that they may be equal to the unknown Pains and Pleasures of the State of Bliss or Horror, in which they shall be immortal ; that they may jointly with the Saints and Sinners Souls, sustain the Joys or Anguish they shall everlastingly feel, as they have now sowed to the Flesh, or to the Spirit.

This naturally enlarges my Thoughts, and carries us to the

2d Remark. As *David* well knew he was a dying Man, so it is plain he knew that all of him did not die : but there was a part, the most valuable by far, which shou'd survive.

vive. That a deathless Inhabitant did then reside in that House of Clay whose Foundation was in the Dust. A Jewel of inestimable Worth lay in that Chest. He was so much a Philosopher, as to understand that Spirit and Matter, were widely different; that the thinking, reasoning, joying, grieving, hoping, fearing, part of him, was not that Lump of Earth impregnated, which the World beheld, but an invisible rational Agent, self conscious; which tho we know little or nothing of its simple abstract Nature, for distinction's sake, we call *the Soul*. That we are a Compositum, act by mechanical Rules, at Death are like the Brutes, our very Being ceasing, no danger therefore of Accounts, is such a Stretch, as the Royal Author, prompt as his Genius, and most desirable as his Advantages for improving his Mind, had not attained to. It seems abundantly clear, that as he knew he had a Body which must be Food for Worms, he was as well assured he had a Soul that was capable of Converse with Holy Angels. Purgatory and Soul-sleeping, are novel Inventions; but you know, that in the last times, such Dreams, Dotages, Blasphemies, all that is contrary to sound Doctrine are to make a Push; and happy are they who in an Hour of Temptation maintain their Uprightness; and are not offended in Christ.

David was a Man after God's own Heart, led by his Spirit, guided by his Counsel: not
that

that supernatural Aid was necessary to produce a Conviction which cannot but arise from a Review of our own Make ; tho what followed upon this, was without question the Work of God. If no Man can call Christ Lord, but by the Spirit, I see not how he can unfeignedly commit himself to him, but thro' the same all-powerful, eternal Lord the Spirit. There is a wide Difference between knowing that I have a Soul, and the putting it as a solemn Act of Religion into Christ's Hands : for the first natural Light will suffice, but the other requires superior Teachings and special Grace, to carry me to the adequate Object of my Faith and Confidence, and enable me to discharge acceptably one of the most affecting momentous Services practicable in the present State.

3dly, It is further intimated in the Text, that *David* saw if he did not now take care to provide this Soul of happy Being after Death, he must be to an Extremity, and everlastingly miserable. That this was the accepted time, and the day of Salvation ; to day, while it is called to day. That he was now to make Friends, that when Heart or Flesh failed, he might be received into everlasting Habitations, lift up his Head, have Confidence before his Judge, and neither be ashamed, or afraid at his Coming. That while God waited upon him in his great Long-suffering, he was to prepare an Ark to the saving of himself ; or rather flee for Refuge to lay

lay hold on the Hope set before him. He knew that all Knowledge, Counsel, Device, Working, ceased in the Grave; that the dead prais'd not God; nor was there room left for Repentance, when the limited Space for our Trial expired: that there could not therefore be a Minute's Delay, which did not expose his Folly, and endanger his Happiness.

How will his Example confound Numbers, who might see as it were Face to Face, what he beheld thro' a Glass, and darkly, yet remain uninfluenced by the Revelation which has brought Life and Immortality to Light? Are as unattentive to Soul matters, as if a future World, a reckoning Day, an Heaven, and an Hell, Salvation and Destruction both from God, were Chat for Babes? The Broodings of an over-heated Fancy, but contemptible to Men of free Enquiry, and close Thought? God knows, that too many of these living Contradictions, these unbelieving irreligious Professors, may be pointed at in our day. This is among the humbling Tokens which are upon us, tho we are drinking Wine, and slaying Oxen, when called to Baldness, and girding with Sackcloth: And is it reasonable to imagine, that such as not only live without God in the World, but walk contrary to him, declare this their Sin as *Sodom*, and hide it not; they who cast off the Restraints which render many an impious Creature less grossly offensive, do think of
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their Soul's worth, its Danger, the Necessity of looking out quickly, seriously for its future well being? He that thinks so, *exceeds* in Charity, or Folly: Charity takes the *Persons* of Men under its Wing, but is not of the right Stamp when engaged in giving Protection to their Sins.

4thly, *David* having gone the just mentioned Lengths, saw his Redeemer's to be the only safe hands, in which to deposit so great a Trust; or whence he could expect the desired Happiness. That the Man was cursed who trusted in *Man*, made Flesh his Arm, his Heart departing from the living God. That *Angels* were but ministring Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation; and their Servants, could not be their Saviours. Probably he had tried all other Expedients, turned over in his capacious Mind whatever Flesh and Blood upon close Consultation with them, could suggest, before he settled. He made large Searches, but no place found for the Sole of his Foot, whatsoever Scope he had indulged, till he came to build on that Foundation which God has laid, elect and precious.

I the rather incline to this way of thinking, because the Scripture abundantly instructs us as to our *Natural* Averseness to the Gospel Method of Salvation; to the Saviour himself, the Nature of his Salvation, but especially his way of interesting his People in it: and I persuade myself, that the best among

mong us, have more or less, found their *Experiences* suit to this account of things. We have look'd for Happiness in the World too much; too long been raising goodly hopes from Works of Righteousness which we have done, or fully purposed to do; nor were we alive, till we saw ourselves dead; brought into the way of Salvation till brought home to Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of Souls; whose is the only Name given under Heaven among Men by which they can be saved. Happy they who see that they are compleat in Christ, tho undone without him. This Knowledge necessarily precedes all saving Applications to him, as Life goes before Motion or Action; for it is the Cause, Reason, Principle of both. The whole have no need of the Physician, or value for him, but they that are sick. While we can find any other Refuge, however false and unsafe, these miserable Comforters, failing Waters, will be resorted to. None ever lodged their Souls with Christ, who were not made to see that he could be that to them, and do that for them, that universal Nature could neither be, or do. Such Convictions were fully formed in the Mind of the Royal Psalmist; or his could not have been an Action worthy of a Man of Thought and Judgment. When,

5thly, He made an impartial Resignation of his Soul to Christ, one of the highest noblest Acts of Faith. Depending upon his Righteousness

ousness to justify from the Guilt, and his precious Blood to cleanse from all Filthiness of Flesh or Spirit, contracted by Sin. His Power, Goodness, Veracity, to carry him safely thro' the remaining Difficulties of Life, and the foreseen Struggles of a dying Hour. To bruise Satan under his Feet, and bring him off more than a Conqueror; receive his departing Spirit, and conduct it to the peaceful Realms above, where Sin being a Stranger, Peace must be as a River, and Joy as a Flood: nothing annoy World without end.

Wise the Choice, judicious the Surrender, calm his Mind in the Survey! O that each of us were helped to do likewise, and we might then say without Hesitation, be blameless in the Speech, let us go and die also.

The Conduct has enough to defend it, if we draw the whole Case, as it appeared to *David*, into *this* short View; he knew that the Redeemer of his Soul *loved* it well; that as he was the *Lord God*, he had *Ability* sufficient to perfect all that concerned it; and as the *Lord God of Truth*, he stood under some special *Engagements*, to exert this Power, and display this Love, which he could not fail of discharging. Thoughts which weighed, do vindicate his Conduct, and throw a peculiar Beauty upon it.

1. He reasonably committed his Spirit into Christ's Hand, because as his *Redeemer*, he must know that he *lov'd* it. The Proof of his Affection in dying, that we might live thro' his

his Name, he saw in the Light of Faith, which is the Evidence of unseen Things, as certainly *future*; as we by the same Faith rest upon the Merit of that Atonement, so many Ages removed from the time in which he made his Soul a Sacrifice for Sin. Did he lay down the full Price? Strong his Affection if we think what this was. When we are tempted to doubt of this, it would not be improper to ask ourselves this plain question, If he did not most dearly love us, to what purpose was all this Cost? And if he did, and does, laid down one Life, and is now employing another to shew it, how decent this Acknowledgment of his Right? This Return for his Love, who when once we give him our Hearts sees of the travail of his Soul, and is satisfied? It never constrains us as it should, till quitting all foreign Claims and Service, we thus kiss the Son; put the Souls he has purchased, under his Patronage; fully assured he will in the best way care for them; and rest in his Love. As this is doing our Duty to our Saviour, so it is a most wisely prosecuting our own Interest; for having loved us as his own, he will love us to the end, nor shall any Creature separate us: our Names are now engraven upon the Palms of his Hands; every want and burthen continual before him. A Woman may forget the sucking Child, her Compassions be restrained to the Son of her Womb, but he numbers the very Hairs of their Heads, nor

can his People whom he has redeemed be ever forgotten. In some, *Love* is separated from *Power*, and tho they may wish us well, they cannot do us any considerable Service. It is not thus in the Case before us; I therefore add,

2dly, That *David* saw *Power* belong'd to that Lord God, into whose Hands he committed his Spirit. All Power in Heaven, and Earth. He could not have been a Redeemer worthy of the Father's Appointment, or the Saints Choice, was his Arm shortened, tho his Heart large: but Christ is a Prince, as well as a Saviour; made the Worlds, sustains them, and is able to subdue all things to himself. He will make this Power known, in bringing all his incorrigible Enemies under his Feet, taking Vengeance on such as would not know him, or obey his Gospel: in pardoning, subduing, and purging away his Peoples Sins; carrying the devout Souls at Death to Glory, gathering and reanimating your widely separated Dust, when the end of all things at hand, and the Thrones set for Judgment; in opening the Gates of Hell, and the whole invisible State, so as that none can shut them; and so shutting as that none shall open them for ever. This Faith, these Hopes filled holy *Stephen's* Mind, when stoning him, he call'd upon God, saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit'. He knew,

? Acts vii. 59.

that when he put his Soul into the Redeemer's Hands, he intrusted it with God : who being greater than all, and compared with whom none is good, his Hopes could not miscarry ; and that if he was quickly to be with him in Paradise, tho' the way rough, the end would be Peace. Was Christ the God of the *Jews*, and is he not the God of the *Gentiles* also? Had they such solid Faith in his Power to save, and shall we fall beneath them in Duty, who so far excel them in Privilege? God forbid. Was he able as willing to save *David's* and *Stephen's* Souls with an eternal Salvation? No number of Ages intervening can weaken or abate infinite Power : it follows then, that Christ being the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, without Variableness, or the Shadow of turning, we want not for fit Encouragement to imitate their bright Examples ; and are both weak and wicked, if we do not.

3dly, There is one Thought more, plainly suggested, shewing the Propriety of *David's* Conduct, *viz.* That as his Redeemer was the Lord God of *Truth*, he stood under some special *Engagements*, to manifest this Power, and Love, in the Salvation of his People's Souls, nor could fail of acquitting himself faithfully. Christ was a *Surety* to his Father for his *People* ; the Counsel of Peace was between them both *. They are often

* Zech. vi. 13.

mention'd as a Gift, but yet as a Trust, for which the Redeemer became most voluntarily responsible : and so faithful is he that has promised, who also will do it. The *Power* of Christ feeds many a pleasant Thought, in a devout Mind ; indeed he is *altogether* Lovely : how sweet the Repast, when we set ourselves to trace the Wonders of such unprecedented zealous *Charity*, or *Affection*, as passes comprehensive Knowledge ? But this all-gracious, all-mighty Saviour standing under *Bonds* to make me fit for Heaven, and then take me to it, this Thought compleats my Confidence, and should give the most plentiful Flow to my Joy. God the Father, speaking of his Son, as Mediator, told the World that he was his *righteous Servant* ; and Christ under the same Character, and Relation, has returned the Language ; as publicly declared that he had a *righteous Father*³. Doubtless, he had an Eye to this, when they were his last Words, Father, into thine hands I commend my Spirit⁴ ; having thus said, he gave up the Ghost. *q. d.* Thou hast promised that low as I am now brought, in fulfilling the Commandment I have received from thee, thine Holy one shall not see Corruption ; that tho I am bruised, put to Grief, thus stricken for the Transgression of my People, and am to have my Grave with the

³ Compare Isaiah liii. 11. with John xvii. 25.

⁴ Luke xxiii. 46.

Wicked, yet I shall divide the Spoil with the Strong: I do not stagger thro' Unbelief, but yield my Soul to thee in full Assurance of thy *Veracity*. What was Reason sufficient to determine our Saviour, thus, in his last Moment, must be fit to incline us to the same awful Service, and defend us in the Discharge of it. Did he trust his Father as *Righteous*, with a departing Spirit? So should we our Redeemer, with ours; nor dare to call his Fidelity in Question, whom the Father has pronounced Righteous.

Enough has been said, under the *Doctrinal* Part of the Subject; let us bring things nearer, by a particular *Application*.

God has distinguished our human Nature, with rational, intelligent, immortal *Souls*, let us enquire seriously, what we have done with them; what we have done for them: in whose Hands they are, under whose Direction, or at whose Disposal. God has shown great regard to them; they are his Off-spring, who is the Father of Spirits; what has he left undone, necessary to their present and endless Happiness, who sent his Son to seek and save them when lost? Are they so dear to him, who best knows their Nature, and Worth, what Thoughts have we had about the principal Pieces of ourselves? How has their Value, and Danger, affected us? Questions of greater weight, and more becoming the dignity of our Natures cannot be put: nor are the Trifles which depend upon our
Re-

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Resolutions. We are either in a State of Nature or a State of Grace; in Christ's or in the Devil's hands; are fenced and sheltered against all the Curses of a broken Law, or lie open to these destructive Thunders; have all our Hope in this Life, and Portion in it, or more extended Views and Expectations of Happiness; and are in desirable, or most wretched Circumstances, as one or the other of the Descriptions takes in our Case.

1st, Have you been making Provision for the Flesh, to fulfill the Lusts of it? What God numbers among his Jewels, has this been Lumber to you, overlook'd, or thrown aside? Have you been occupying with every other Talent, yet never put this to the Exchangers? In short, have you been carking and catering for a vile Body, and slighted a Soul whose Redemption is too *Precious* for all in this World to procure? If so, suffer the Words of Reproof, and Exhortation.

1st, These Neglects have been *Cruel*. If no Man ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourished and cherished it; if a different Temper, and Usage towards this mortal corruptible Part, would be censured by the Law of Reason, or Religion, sure the Crime cannot want for Aggravation, when the Soul neglected, for which Christ died. Murderers of Fathers and Mothers are reckoned among the most abandoned, and abominable; but how shall we paint your Guilt, who
are

are Self-Destroyers? That are without one kind Thought towards Souls made after the Image of God. Say, Sinner, such an unnatural Creature have I been; not only wanting to serve myself, but an Imbruer of mine Hands in mine own Blood. Consider,

2. That as your Neglects have been cruel, so your Danger is great. Who can tell that God will give you a longer Space for Repentance, or an Heart to repent? And if you have not both, your Ruin is as certain, as it's certain that God is true. This may be your last Sabbath, your last Day. Repeated Sights give you no just Hopes of further Patience; but contrarily should awaken your Fears of impending Wrath, and Judgment at the Door. Should thy Soul be this Night required of thee, and he is a Fool who dares affirm otherwise, think what is meant by being in outer Darkness; with the Devil and his Angels. Is there but the frail Thread of natural Life, snapt in sunder in the twinkling of an Eye, between thee, Sinner, and the second Death? Do not cry Peace, for thou art in Jeopardy every Moment. Yet,

3. Your Case is not remediless, nor desperate. The Saviour to whom you have been long, too long estranged, is the Lover of Souls: wants not, cannot want either Will, or Power, to succour and relieve such as come to him, that they may have Life. Pray to him, for a Mind thus illuminated; a Will thus disposed; that he would work that in
E you,

you, which you cannot do for your-self. That he would not say it's too late, when weary and heavy laden, you come to him for Rest ; or refuse the Trust, when you commit your Spirit into his Hand. A Necessity lies upon you ; I can only shew you your Duty, and recommend these Attempts to the divine Blessing : It is God must open your Understanding, so as to render the Convictions sound, saving, practical.

2dly, If Conscience bears witness in your Favour (and I would hope the best things of many here, things accompanying Salvation.)

1. Be thankful, for this Mark of discriminating Favour. Whence is this to you, and not unto the World ? Creatures naturally as unready to every good Word, and Work, as others ? And as unworthy of the Assistance requir'd to both ? How came it that you were more thoughtful of your Souls ? That you should be more affected with their Danger and active about their Safety than in the case with Thousands ? Should see the proper Hands in which to leave them, which they under the same means of Instruction, did not perceive ? And actually do, what many neglected, even against the Remonstrances of their own Minds ? Is not this the Lord's doing ? It should be marvellous in your Eyes. In your Lips Praise is comely, the want of it indecent : his Glory should be your Song while in the House of your Pilgrimage.

2. Walk

2. Walk humbly with your God. Be not high-minded ; the more you have receiv'd, not as Debt, but Grace, the more you owe. Boasting is excluded, and such as glory must glory in the Lord alone. There is a Vanity that is natural to us : even spiritual Privileges will puff up, elate and swell the Mind : Thus Manna bred a Worm. No Temper is more offensive to God, or absurd, and incongruous to our Character as fallen Creatures. That you had an Heart to know, fear and choose God, was because he had set his Love upon you, not for Beauty or Worth excelling, but it was thus, Father, because it so seemed good in thy Sight. The higher he has advanced you, be still the lower in your own Eyes : Pride goes before Destruction, and an haughty Spirit before a Fall.

3. Trust him without wavering in less matters, with whom you have deposited your Soul. Never say, can God prepare a Table in the Wilderness ? Can he provide Flesh for his People ? Is your Redeemer, your Husband, the Lord of Hosts, the Lord God of Truth his Name ? Then he can do, whatever he will do, and if he has made no Covenant with Day and Night, may prove slack concerning his many Promises to you. Have no distressing anxious Thoughts about Trifles ; if you continue to seek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, you shall not fail in the grand points,

and other things shall be added (or cast in) to you.

4. Think with Frequency and Pleasure of your approaching Change. That your time of Vanity, and Labour under the Sun, is running off apace; and your Salvation every Day nearer than when you first believed. That it will not be long, ere you are got above the reach of Temptation, and where neither Satan or Sin shall disturb you more. He is a wise Man that dies daily, who spares no Diligence necessary to his attaining a full Assurance of Hope unto the end. He is happy who can conclude upon good Grounds, that the Day of his Redemption draws nigh; and the Day of his Death will be a better one than the Day in which it was said there is a Man-child born into the World. Whose Loins are girt, and his Lamp trimmed, and he ready to depart to be with Christ. Meditate on such things, Christian, give yourself wholly to them, and your profiting will appear. To conclude,

5. Beware of charging God foolishly, when he calls home such as have been near, and dear to you, as the Fulfilment of his Covenant, and in virtue of the Resignation they have made of their Souls to him, Nor are we in small Danger by such Providences, if the Heart be not kept as with a Bridle. God has touched you of this Church, in a most sensible part, in removing

ing your Minister, who was a burning and shining Light : be still under his mighty Hand that is lifted up, and tho you *bemoan* yourselves, take heed of *Murmuring*. Thirty Years, come the 15th of next *September*, had he been serving Christ, and his Peoples Souls in the work of the Gospel. Near twenty seven of these¹ were you favoured with his most edifying Labours. A chosen richly furnished Vessel ! He had the Tongue of the Learned, and well knew how to speak a Word in Season : was a Preacher that found out acceptable Words. I believe, that but few had so general a Reputation this Way, or were more cut out for extensive Usefulness. The Matter or Substance of his stated Ministry, was the great things of God. How clear his Thoughts ? His Zeal, and Affection how beautifully regulated, you well know. You were not put off with dry abstruse Speculations, or teaz'd with Harangues that only gender Strife ; but had both Milk and Meat as you could bear, the sound and wholesom Provisions of the Family in Variety, and with Elegance ; he had received of the Lord, what he delivered to you. And who that was used to attend him, but concluded that he Believed, and therefore Spoke ? Many hundreds will miss him, es-

¹ Mr. *Wilcox* was Ordained by Mr. *Spademan*, Mr. *Tong*, Mr. *Robinson*, and Mr. *Sheffield*, at *Abbots Rooding* in *Essex*, Sept. 15, 1703. Chosen Assistant to Mr. *Doolittle*, October 27, 1706. whom he Succeeded.

pecially upon the return of Sacramental Occasions. What a crouded Audience, has encouraged your Saturday Evening Lecture, for a course of Years? Persons of different Denominations and Communions, have hung upon his Lips, their Hearts burning within them while he opened to them the Scriptures. He was no Bigot, yet firm and steddly to his Principles. Facetious, without Levity. Charitable, without Ostentation. He deserved well from the World, but expected little from it. In both Publick and Private, he was an Ornament to his Character; and full of Grace and Peace, tho not of Days, his Lord and ours has taken him: taken him away by a *sudden Stroke*, for he needed not any formal Notice. May he sanctify the Breach; may a praying Spirit be more than ever at Work among you; that the Lord of the Harvest may interest himself in your future Supply; for tho the Harvest indeed is great, faithful Labourers, are comparatively few. May he be a God of Truth keeping Covenant with his Servants surviving Seed; and each of us make such a wise Improvement of what we have seen or heard, as that for us to live may be Christ, and to die be Gain: our exchanging Worlds, bring us to the Perfection of Felicity, which as Christians we are wishing, and waiting for.

F I N I S.

